

CITY BUDGET

Sleep off changes, development incentives considered at meeting. A3.

NEW PRINCIPAL

Mendenhall River Community School hires former Juneauite. Below.

LASTING IMPRESSION

Team Juneau members reflect on Native Youth Olympics. B1.

Experts: B.C. needs better mining standards

Legislators look to governor to be advocate

By ALEX McCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Experts from both sides of the Alaska-British Columbia border agreed Tuesday that the British Columbia government is not preparing well enough for possible future mining disasters. Eight people testified to the House Fisheries Committee on Tuesday at the Capitol, all of them urging including

Jason Dion from Canada's Ecofiscal Commission (an organization that looks to promote economic and environmental prosperity). Dion's presentation centered around how the provincial government doesn't have a financial assurance policy for mining disasters — in other words, a mining company might not have to pay for the whole cost of an environmental cleanup.

"When a company knows it might not bear all of the cost of a risk imposed or the harm it might cause, it has less of an economic incentive to reduce that risk," Dion, who testified by phone, said. "From our perspective, that's a really, really important shortcoming."

For Alaska — which has more stringent mining standards than British Columbia — that's a big deal.

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Rep. Louise Stutes, R-Kodiak and chair of the House Fisheries Committee, speaks during a meeting about transboundary mining on Tuesday.

ALEX McCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

KEEPING THE LIGHT ON



ALEX McCARTHY | JUNEAU EMPIRE

Eldred Rock Lighthouse Preservation Association Executive Director Sue York speaks to Marine Exchange of Alaska Field Operations Supervisor Nick Hatch at Eldred Rock Lighthouse on Monday.

Efforts to preserve lighthouse poised to pick up

Nonprofit pursuing lease of Eldred Rock Lighthouse

By ALEX McCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Every summer, hundreds of thousands of people see Eldred Rock Lighthouse. Cruise and ferry passengers, as well as locals passing through, can't help but look at the octagonal, white and red structure atop a craggy cliff in the middle of Lynn Canal. If they were

able to stop and look closer at the 114-year-old lighthouse, they'd see the bright white paint is peeling — and that's the least of the concerns, Eldred Rock Lighthouse Preservation Association (ERLPA) board member Justin Fantasia said. "I'm not worried about paint," Fantasia said. "I'm worried about hunks of concrete that are falling off from the building."

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Eldred Rock Lighthouse Preservation Association Executive Director Sue York and Marine Exchange of Alaska's board representative Jonathan Wood share ideas at the Eldred Rock Lighthouse on Monday.

City Hall move

New, two-floor structure would be built if move decided

By BEN HOHENSTATT
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Juneau City Hall could soon be parked in a new spot. A plan was presented Monday night during a City and Borough of Juneau Committee of the Whole meeting that would move the city's headquarters from 155 Seward St. to a new, two-floor structure on top of a downtown parking garage built in 2009 as part of the Downtown Transportation Center.

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School has new principal

A day after public interview, former Juneauite hired

By BEN HOHENSTATT
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Mendenhall River Community School has its new principal. Juneau School District announced Joanna "JJ" Hinderberger's hiring Tuesday afternoon, one day after she publicly interviewed for the position. "I am overjoyed to have the opportunity to be the Principal of Mendenhall River Community School," Hinderberger said in a press release.

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EDUCATION

District announces tentative agreement with education support staff

Details of potential contract not yet public

By BEN HOHENSTATT
JUNEAU EMPIRE

An agreement may soon be in place between Juneau School District and Juneau Education Support Staff. A tentative, three-year agreement between the district and its second big-

gest employee association was announced in a district press release Monday afternoon, but neither the district nor the educator union is sharing details about the potential contract at this time. JESS, which is a bargaining unit that represents

about 320 district employees with a contract set to expire by July, has yet to ratify the tentative agreement, and the next step in the bargaining process will be a vote expected to take place Saturday to determine whether the agreement has JESS members' approval. Juneau School District Superintendent Bridget

Weiss said Tuesday afternoon if JESS favors the agreement, the district would then move quickly to ratify the agreement. Weiss said the bargaining process has been efficient, which is backed up by the date at which the tentative agreement was announced. Members of JESS and district administrators

signed the previous three-year agreement in mid June 2016. "This negotiation process with JESS has been highly collaborative, very constructive, and it's always an exciting time to sort of recalibrate and recommunicate what needs are on both sides of a contract," Weiss said in a phone inter-

view. "We're really excited about the potential of having a three-year contract again." Weiss said she anticipates the agreement will be discussed during an executive session at a Tuesday, May 14 school board meeting.

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MINING:

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Chris Sergeant, a research scientist at the University of Montana who is based in Alaska, gave a presentation to the committee running through Southeast Alaska watershed statistics. The presentation stated that almost 90 percent of Southeast Alaska households use salmon in some capacity, a number that he said underscores the importance of caring for the region's rivers. He also showed that 19

percent of the drainage area in the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers' watersheds is covered by mining claims and leases. He showed that 59 percent of the land area in the Unuk River watershed is covered by mining claims and leases. Rep. Geran Tarr, D-Anchorage, asked during the meeting why there are so many mining projects in British Columbia that have popped up in recent years. Jill Weitz, executive director of Salmon State, answered her by saying the completion of the Northwest Transmission Line in 2014 brought electricity to the region of northwest British Columbia.

Weitz pointed out that only about 2,000 people live in that region of British Columbia, compared to the 75,000 people living in Southeast. "Many folks consider that part of B.C. the middle of nowhere, where we maintain that it is the center of everything for us," Weitz said. "So you have power generating to a very mineral-rich region and not many people there to have a voice and organize around." The main example used throughout Tuesday's meeting was the Mount Polley Mine, which became well known in 2014 after the dam on its tailings pond broke

and dumped years of mining waste into nearby Polley Lake and rivers in the watershed. Imperial Metals, which owns the Mount Polley Mine and others in B.C., is in dire financial straits and many environmental organizations are worried that Imperial could end up declaring bankruptcy and walking away from its mines without paying for the cleanup. Tuesday's hearing was set up in part because 22 Alaska lawmakers signed a letter April 9 asking Gov. Mike Dunleavy and Lt. Gov. Kevin Meyer to continue the Transboundary Working Group. The group, established by former Gov. Bill

Walker and former British Columbia Premier Christy Clark in 2015, aims to transparently share information and best practices, collaborate on data gathering and research, and to discuss draft permits and authorizations. Rep. Louise Stutes, R-Kodiak and chair of the House Fisheries Committee, said at the end of Tuesday's meeting that she's looking to pen her own letter to the administration about this issue. The letter will carry a similar tone to the April 9 letter, asking the administration to engage with Alaskans and with the state's congressional delegation and carry on the work of the previous administration

on finding ways to protect the region's watersheds. She said she hopes to send it with the support of the rest of the committee. The Dunleavy administration didn't immediately respond to an email for comment on where transboundary mining issues rank on the governor's priority list. "It's not about resource development versus conservation," Stutes said. "We are simply asking our neighbors across the border to adhere to best and safe practices in mining in our shared watersheds, which is clearly something they have a poor track record with."

EFFORTS:

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Fantasia, a construction expert, was part of a team that went out to the remote lighthouse — which is the oldest original lighthouse in the state — Monday to take stock of what needs to be repaired. It's a daunting task, as the lighthouse has been unmanned since 1973 and has fallen into disrepair without anyone to maintain it. ERLPA, with the help of the Marine Exchange of Alaska, is starting the process of taking over the lighthouse to better preserve it. The U.S. Coast Guard currently owns it, but ERLPA Executive Director Sue York said she's hoping to work out

a lease soon where ERLPA can eventually take over the lighthouse. York, who used to work for the Coast Guard, said she was brought on in large part because of her experience with the Coast Guard in hopes that she could jump through the hoops of the lease process. Part of getting that lease, the Marine Exchange of Alaska's representative on the ERLPA board Jonathan Wood said, is a site assessment where the current state of the lighthouse has to be documented. York took iPhone videos of as much of the building as she could, narrating as she went along. Fantasia gave advice about what kind of repairs could be done. Wood, who has been coming to the lighthouse regularly since 2014, took notes and pointed out changes he's seen over the

years. York and Wood both said the lighthouse is significant for the role it's played in Southeast's maritime history. "Anybody who cares about history and all that, you don't want to see something like this become a complete eyesore or even worse, collapse and become unrecoverable," Wood said. ERLPA has raised awareness about the lighthouse in recent years with the Run 4 the Rock race that raises money for the lighthouse. York said there isn't a fundraising goal yet, but they're hoping to start ramping up efforts after they get the lease taken care of. They're still a ways away from knowing how much the repairs will cost. The lease will make it easier for them to qualify for grants, too, as the building will be managed by a non-profit instead of the U.S. gov-

ernment. The crew arrived on the 2.4-acre island about 18 miles south of Haines to find an unsurprising sight. The door of one of the buildings on the island had been blown off sometime in the past few months. With winds measuring up to 114 miles per hour, the buildings regularly get battered. It wasn't quite as bad as a greeting that they got on their first trip out there, Wood said, when they found that otters had occupied the lighthouse and had turned the attic into their bathroom. Otters aren't the only visitors to the island. York said she sees social media posts from time to time of passers by or even from brave kayakers who venture out to the remote island and take pictures in the lighthouse (the bathtub is apparently the most popular spot).

One day, York said, she hopes visitors will be able to easily access the island and visit the renovated lighthouse. The first priority is preserving the building, she said, but she wants to share the lighthouse's history with visitors with signs and information on the island. Those at the Marine Exchange of Alaska, wanted to get involved with the efforts as well, and have helped in a few ways. Nick Hatch, field operations supervisor for the Marine Exchange, drove the boat out to the island for the ERLPA group Monday. Hatch said Marine Exchange Executive Director Ed Page took a liking to the lighthouse's significance. The Marine Exchange communicates with boats throughout Alaska's waters to keep them informed and safe. Their technology, Hatch pointed out, performs

the task that lighthouses used to perform with their lights and foghorns. Page's vision, Hatch said, includes possibly installing a weather station on the island and equipment that can send information to vessels. "That's one of his big things, is getting the lighthouse operational again in a way," Hatch said. "They're not just a light, they're a place for weather data to be transmitted to boats, and other information too." That possibility is still a long time down the road, as is ERLPA's vision. A few of the bedrooms in the lighthouse have been painted in recent years, giving a small preview of what the lighthouse might look like down the line. As York, Fantasia and Wood stood in the southeast bedroom of the lighthouse Monday, York looked at the lavender walls and beamed.

MOVING:

Continued from Page A1

"I think there needs to be a new city hall, whether any of us sitting up here will ever have a meeting there," said Assembly member Rob Edwardson, who later added a new city hall in the Mendenhall Valley might make just as much or more sense. City Manager Rorie Watt said the project would help consolidate City and Bor-

ough of Juneau employees to one central location and make things more efficient. A NorthWind Architects estimate puts the price of the proposed New City Hall to cost \$26,732,600. Rain Coast Data estimates operating costs custodial, utilities and minor maintenance to be \$331,762 annually, according to a city summary. "I'll be frank, it's higher than I hoped," Watt said. The plan, as roughly outlined Monday night would be to recoup some of that cost by selling the current city hall. The property is currently

insured for \$3.4 million, according to a city summary of the project, and it would be expected to sell for before \$2.4 and \$3.5 million. The project would also be paid for via general obligation bonds, and a packet summarizing the project includes three potential payment options for the Assembly to consider. They were not discussed at length, but they are detailed in city documents. One option planned for no "down payment," one called for \$5 million and one called for \$10 million. The

lower the price paid up front, the more that would need to come from general obligation bonds, which would result in property tax increases. No down payment would result in an increase of .15 mills or a \$15 tax increase for a \$100,000 home; \$5 million would mean .09 or \$9 and \$10 million would result in .03 for a \$3 increase. There was talk of the project's necessity, price tag and what the timeline is for the project. Assembly member Wade Bryson asked how often city employees need to visit a staff

member in another building. "I would estimate it happens all the time," Watt said. "I would give you another answer, and it's a little cheeky, not often enough." Assembly member Maria Gladziszewski asked if there might be other, cheaper options that could or should be considered. Watt said alternatives that come up in anticipated public discussion should be considered, but he preemptively shot down one idea that's often circulated — the old Walmart building. "It's four times larger than

we need. It's built as a box store," Watt said. "It's high ceiling. That kind of thing." There was not an exact timeline provided for the project, but the possibility of bringing the idea to ballots by this or next October were discussed. Assembly member Loren Jones said if residents are going to vote on the idea this year, there needs to be a concerted effort to get information out as quickly as possible. The city manager was ultimately instructed to go out and seek public input, which

SCHOOL:

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"I am really looking forward to collaborating with staff, students and families to nurture strengths and facilitate growth to ensure we are the

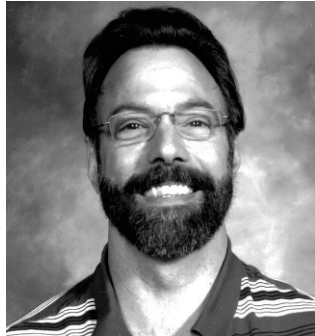
best version of ourselves." "I would like to express my gratitude for the interview committee, the MRCS community," she added. Hinderberger is finishing her second year as principal at Eagle's View Elementary School in Unalaska. She also serves as district test coordinator, special education and English Language Learner co-

ordinator for the Unalaska City School District. During her public interview, Hinderberger said taking the Mendenhall River Community School job would be a sort of homecoming for her since she was born in Juneau, raised in Haines and began her teaching career in Juneau by completing her educational leadership intern-

ship at Sayeik: Gastineau and Juneau-Douglas High School Yadaa.at Kalé. Hinderberger also served as Interim Assistant Principal at JDHS in 2016. Previously, the Mendenhall River Community School job was offered to a Washington state elementary school principal, who declined the offer. Hinderberger was the

first person to publicly interview for the position since the search was formally re-opened. Superintendent Bridget Weiss said she's pleased with what Hinderberger will bring to the school and the district. She specifically said Hinderberger's experience with pre-kindergarten programs and special education is welcomed.

"JJ brings so many things to our district, and she of course started her teaching career in this district," Weiss said in a phone interview.



COREY M. PAVITT, DC

ROUTINES

I have been traveling a lot recently. While a lot about it is enjoyable, being away from home does make it hard to stay on my routines. Routine is really just another word for habit and habits seem to happen whether we consciously try to shape them or not. Even though my routines at home are things I want to be doing and make me feel better, it's interesting how long I can go without doing them if I get out of the habit. I've found that the best thing to do when off track is just to start again and fake it until being on track feels routine.

**Yours in good health,
Corey**



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Alaska VA Healthcare System Director

Dr. Timothy D. Ballard, MD

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**Thursday, May 2
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For tickets, go to www.unitedwayseak.org.